United Nations S/PV.5801

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5801st meeting

Thursday, 13 December 2007, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Spatafora/Mr. Mantovani	(Italy)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott

Agenda

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste, 24-30 November 2007 (S/2007/711)

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07-64195 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste, 24-30 November 2007 (S/2007/711)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal and Timor-Leste, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Borges (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/711, containing the report of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Baso Sangqu, who will deliver a statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa and head of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Sangqu.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa was honoured that Ambassador Kumalo was afforded the opportunity to lead the Security Council mission that visited Timor-Leste from 24 November to 30 November 2007. As was explained last week during our briefing (see S/PV.5791), the purpose of the visit was to address three issues: first, to encourage the Government, the parliament, the political parties and the people of Timor-Leste to continue to work together and engage in political dialogue and to consolidate peace, democracy and the rule of law, security sector reform, sustainable social and economic development and national reconciliation in their country; secondly, to discuss and exchange views with the Timorese authorities on ways and means to assist the country in developing capacities necessary to build on security and democracy and other gains achieved thus far and to express the Security Council's full support for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste; and thirdly, to assess progress made on the ground relating to the implementation of UNMIT's mandate.

During the visit, the mission met with various interlocutors in the Government, including the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and with members of the judiciary and the national parliament, and it held a meeting with the leader of the main opposition party and other political parties.

The mission also held interactions with non-governmental organizations, women, youth and church representatives and representatives of UNMIT and other United Nations agencies on the ground. The mission also received a briefing from the International Stabilisation Force led by Australia and New Zealand.

The report presented to the Council (S/2007/711) covers the following key areas and issues: national reconciliation and democracy, the general security situation and security sector reform, capacity-building; justice and the rule of law, the situation of internally displaced persons, human rights and socio-economic development issues. From the report it is evident that, despite relative progress, Timor-Leste still faces enormous challenges associated with political differences among leaders in resolving critical issues facing the country and socio-economic difficulties associated with widespread unemployment and poverty. In the humanitarian sphere, the plight of the internally displaced persons remains a big task facing the people and Government of Timor-Leste.

The report clearly indicates that despite these challenges, the mission left Timor-Leste convinced that the country is on the right path towards sustainable

peace, stability, unity and prosperity. In this context, the mission noted that political dialogue, national reconciliation and continuous engagement aimed at resolving challenges facing the country are the crucial to resolving the country's challenges.

Much still needs to be done, and the engagement of the international community cannot be over-emphasized. In this regard, we urge the international community, as well as United Nations agencies and multilateral financial institutions, to continue providing resources and assistance for the implementation of projects towards sustainable and long-term development in Timor-Leste.

In conclusion, we once again wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Timor-Leste for their hospitality, assistance and cooperation, as well as the entire staff of UNMIT for providing us with the necessary support during the Council's mission to Timor-Leste. We particularly wish to note the invaluable support from the Government of Indonesia for assisting the delegation with smooth transit to Timor-Leste.

Appreciation and gratitude are also extended to the Security Council secretariat and United Nations security personnel for their tireless efforts and support during the mission's preparatory stage and during the mission itself.

We commend this report for the consideration of the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Ms. Borges (Timor-Leste): First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate.

Allow me to express on behalf of the Government and people of Timor-Leste our sincere gratitude for the recent visit by the Security Council. In particular, my delegation wishes to thank Ambassador Kumalo and members of the delegation for the manner in which they engaged with all stakeholders, demonstrating extreme sensitivity, respect and understanding. The report of the mission (S/2007/711) is comprehensive and identifies the challenges and priorities that need to be addressed in order to consolidate peace and stability.

The visit was overwhelmingly positive in that it provided all stakeholders the opportunity to engage with members of the delegation in a frank and honest assessment of the complexities and challenges currently facing the country. Furthermore, in the eyes of the Timorese, the visit was a reaffirmation of the continuing commitment and support of the United Nations and the international community for Timor-Leste. That reaffirmation of support and assistance is timely as the country comes to terms with the consequences of the crisis and searches for sustainable solutions for the maintenance of peace and stability.

The 2006 crisis caused widespread looting and destruction in the capital, where more than 30 people died, more than 100 were wounded and tens of thousands were displaced. We are slowly recovering; however, tens of thousands of people remain in camps in the capital and elsewhere. The Government has pledged to cooperate with all stakeholders to address the situation of internally displaced persons in an adequate and sustainable manner.

Law and order have been restored. However, the relative tranquillity prevailing in the country is a precarious one and is due in large measure to the effective role played by United Nations police and the International Stabilisation Force. This will remain the case until such a time when our police force has been reconstructed and turned into a professional, credible and effective force. This will take two to five years at a minimum.

While significant progress has been made in establishing a democratic legal and institutional framework, centuries of non-self-government and marginalization, including two decades of violence, the lack of any meaningful investment in the intellectual, socio-economic, or physical infrastructure of the country in the past, and the absence of any lasting experience in governance and law enforcement have left the country with profound challenges to its future stability and prosperity. They are compounded by the high levels of unemployment, illiteracy and displacement.

At this critical juncture, the most pivotal short- to medium-term objectives of the Government continues to be the further consolidation of political stability and the maintenance of law and order, while at the same time gradually improving Timor's developmental

prospects by entrenching a culture of democratic governance and strengthening key institutions. There will be no political stability without respect for the rule of law and adequate law enforcement. There will be no lasting socio-economic development, including foreign investment, without political stability and public peace and security.

While development is the ultimate goal, a premature limitation to this goal without the still necessary capacities and assistance of the United Nations in the police and security sector, as well as their partnership and good offices in support of institution-building, would unnecessarily jeopardize the recovery and cautious progress of the past one and a half years.

In this regard, Timor-Leste concurs with the recommendation contained in the report of the Security Council's mission to Timor-Leste to renew the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). As stated in the report, all Timorese interlocutors called for the continued presence of the United Nations while democratic structures are being built in the country.

The Government strongly believes that UNMIT's mandate should be extended for a total of five years, until 2012. It foresees a continued need for the present police and security sector capacities for at least two and a half years, until 2010, to be followed by a Security Council-mandated peace-building mission focusing on governance, police and security-sector assistance and capacity-building for another two and a half years, until 2012.

The Government is mindful of the concerns of the Security Council delegation that the support and assistance of the United Nations and the international community be seen as strengthening democratic institutions, rule of law and self-reliance rather than fostering a climate of dependency. We are conscious that the Timorese leadership and the people must make every effort to consolidate peace and stability in our country. The crisis in 2006 was of our own making, and we must take full responsibility with courage and humility. My delegation wishes to assure members of the Council that in the meantime, we the Timorese will continue our national dialogue so that we may reconcile and heal the wounds of the past which will further contribute to a peaceful, stable, democratic and united country.

However, the reason for our endorsement of the Security Council mission's recommendation for a mandate extension is not dependency. It is the need to develop sustainable, democratic institutions and capacities that have never existed before in Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste has been independent for only five years — a short time frame, considering the enormous challenges of building a nation. When sovereignty was transferred to Timor-Leste in May 2002, only the sketch — the idea of a modern and democratic State — existed. We had to build our country from scratch.

Yet the crisis of 2006 has strengthened rather than weakened the democratic institutional framework and our commitment to the rule of law. For example, throughout the crisis the civil service continued to function and salaries were being paid — a remarkable achievement compared to experiences elsewhere. Democratic, free and fair elections were held free of violence, and the National Parliament has come out strengthened with the active participation by all parties in matters of national priority, including the budget.

I should like to conclude by expressing our most sincere appreciation to the United Nations, the Security Council and to all our bilateral partners for their continued support since 1999. They responded without hesitation to our appeals for assistance and have maintained a continuous presence in our country. Their commitment and friendship will not be forgotten by the people of Timor-Leste.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): I would like to thank the Security Council mission for the report on their recent visit to Timor-Leste (S/2007/711). New Zealand welcomes the mission's visit as an important opportunity for the Council to see first-hand the situation in Timor-Leste, a few months after the formation of the new Government and two months before a decision is required on the future mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

New Zealand acknowledges that there have indeed been encouraging signs of progress in Timor-Leste this past year. Presidential and parliamentary elections have been held successfully, and the new Government has some important accomplishments to mark its first 100 days in office, such as the adoption

of a new Government programme and the approval of an interim budget.

We recognize the complexity of the challenges that the new Government of Timor-Leste is facing, and we would like to reiterate our continuing support for its efforts towards solving these. We would like to take this opportunity to commend the opposition's active participation in parliament as an essential factor in the functioning of a democratic system.

New Zealand is pleased to see that the security situation is gradually improving. However, as noted in the mission's report, the root causes of last year's crisis have not been fully addressed. Underlying political tensions continue to challenge Timor-Leste's young and fragile institutions, and a security downturn could easily see Timor's progress set back. Many problems remain, not least the large number of people who still live in internally displaced persons camps throughout Dili.

New Zealand believes that ongoing involvement by the international community will be needed in order to support the new Government in working towards resolving the many issues it faces. We support a strong, long-term United Nations presence in Timor-Leste. In this sense, the Security Council visit was very important and timely, and we hope it will serve to reaffirm the international community's commitment to supporting Timor-Leste.

The review of UNMIT's mandate in February next year will be very important. Close attention will need to be paid to the skill-sets and focus of the police element within that mission. While New Zealand believes that United Nations Police (UNPOL) numbers should be maintained at the current level, attention should be paid to UNPOL's make-up to ensure that it has the required capability to fulfil its two primary roles: first, to provide security, and, secondly, to support the durable reform and rebuilding of the National Police Force of Timor-Leste through capacity-building and training in core police competencies. Both of those targets are equally important to future stability in Timor-Leste.

New Zealand welcomes the call by the head of the Security Council mission, Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, for the role of UNPOL to be reviewed to ensure maximum results. New Zealand would prefer such a review to be done prior to discussions on UNMIT's mandate in February, as it would be helpful in assessing the progress UNPOL has made thus far, and in ensuring that it has the direction, skills-sets and focus that it needs to carry out its roles in the year ahead.

New Zealand continues to see the need for UNMIT to support the Government of Timor-Leste in reforming and strengthening the justice and security sectors. Security sector reform is an integral part of strengthening Timor-Leste's State and Government institutions, and it is essential to ensuring that Timor-Leste's security needs can be met in the future.

The report of the Security Council mission highlighted many of the issues that still need to be addressed, such as improving cooperation between security institutions, strengthening the legal framework, increasing operational capabilities and enhancing civilian oversight. We urge the Timorese Government and UNMIT to work together on comprehensively reviewing and reforming all aspects of the Timorese security sector, encompassing the Defence Force, the Ministry of Defence, the Police Force and the Ministry of the Interior.

New Zealand remains committed to working with the international community in assisting Timor-Leste in the long term. We continue to contribute defence and police personnel to the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) and to UNPOL, and we commend the positive cooperation between the two. New Zealand appreciates the importance of maintaining stability in Timor-Leste in order to allow reconciliation and State-building to take place, and we expect the ISF to remain in Timor-Leste for the time being.

In conclusion, New Zealand would like to thank the Security Council and UNMIT for their ongoing efforts in Timor-Leste. The Security Council's interest is a welcome demonstration that the international community remains committed to supporting and assisting Timor-Leste.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): At the outset, Sir, the Philippines takes this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and on having convened this important meeting to take up the results of the recently concluded Security Council mission to Timor-Leste. It also commends Ambassador Natalegawa and other

members of the Indonesian delegation for Indonesia's successful presidency of the Council last month. Furthermore, it joins other delegations in thanking Ambassador Kumalo for his exceptionally able leadership of the mission to Timor-Leste.

This recent mission to Timor-Leste is a clear reaffirmation of the Council's commitment to support and assist Timor-Leste in consolidating peace and security, which are vital to speed up the process of democratic governance and the rule of law and to promote long-term stability in that country. The mission is also the Council's best way of getting a clear field assessment of the situation and of obtaining an eyewitness account thereof, conveying the strongest message of encouragement for the Government, the parliament and the people of Timor-Leste to work together for national reconciliation and healing, and sustainable economic and social development.

My delegation has taken note of the briefing made by Ambassador Kumalo on 6 December 2007 (see S/PV.5791) and the report of the mission (S/2007/711) and would like to highlight the following points. First, the Philippines concurs with the mission's view that Timor-Leste will continue to need United Nations assistance in a number of areas, such as, inter alia, governance, the rule of law, security sector reform and economic and social development. It is of the view that, in the pivotal short and medium term, the Government of Timor-Leste would benefit from priority action in the maintenance of law and order, good governance and economic and social development. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) is in a position to provide the necessary assistance in these areas. The present police and security forces are helping the Government of Timor-Leste immeasurably, and their presence should be continued and further enhanced. The mandate of UNMIT to promote economic and social development through the compact between Timor-Leste and the international community, as stated in Security Council resolution 1704 (2006), should be given more focus. Needless to stress, my delegation fully endorses the mission's recommendation to renew UNMIT's mandate, which will expire on 26 February 2008.

Secondly, my delegation recognizes the abundant reservoir of international goodwill for Timor-Leste. This should be sustained. International assistance to Timor-Leste should be geared towards self-reliance, but it should not be arbitrarily narrowed or limited. The Philippines has been consistently contributing to Timor-Leste's nation-building and other endeavours over the years. My country sent a 600-strong humanitarian support mission composed of doctors, nurses, dentists, construction engineers, agriculturists, mechanics and explosive ordnance disposal personnel as part of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) in September 1999. Since then, the Philippines has been successively participating in the successive United Nations operations in Timor-Leste. As part of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the Philippine battalion was composed of over 707 officers and enlisted personnel, with former Philippine Army Chief Lieutenant General Jaime de los Santos appointed as its first Force Commander.

The Philippines is currently the largest contributor of individual police officers to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Most of those officers are in UNMIT, which is the largest police-led peacekeeping operation in which the Philippines has taken part. The present UNMIT Police Commissioner is Rodolfo Tor, Director of the Philippine National Police.

Aside from peacekeeping, the Philippines has made contributions in capacity-building, particularly in human resource development. The Philippines has extended a human resource development package to Timor-Leste through the Third Country Training Programmes of the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Those programmes have included English-language training, training in results monitoring and evaluation, and a foreign service officer cadetship programme for Timor-Leste diplomats, offered through the Foreign Service Institute of the Philippines. In addition, the Philippines is working with Timor-Leste in facilitating the admission of Timorese students to Philippine colleges and universities, as well as in providing vocational training. The Philippines remains ready to explore other areas of assistance to strengthen Timor-Leste's capacities and institutions. The Philippines hopes that the international community will do likewise.

Finally, my delegation is concerned over the mission's assessment that many of the causes of the 2006 crisis — especially those related to the issues of governance, the separation of powers and the building of sustainable institutions — have yet to be addressed. Those are issues with which new and emerging or even

newly restored democracies are usually confronted. Timor-Leste is a part of the United Nations, and any failure in those areas of concern in Timor-Leste, as well as in any other State with the same problems, affects the integrity of the Organization. The United Nations, through the Security Council, is expected to act more decisively to address those concerns. Foremost, of course, is assistance in the building and strengthening of institutions. My delegation submits that progress in that field could have been maintained if the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste had not been drawn down in 2006.

My delegation continues to maintain that Timor-Leste is still one of the best examples of a successful enterprise conceived and nurtured through the sustained combined cooperative efforts of heroic people and their leaders, the United Nations and regional players and partners. The international community should see to it that efforts to build Timor-Leste are further invigorated and enhanced with increasing fidelity and vitality, in order to ensure that it continues to be a success story.

The President: I now call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your initiative in holding this debate. I also wish to thank Ambassador Kumalo for his briefing last week on the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste (see S/PV.5791). Today's debate provides an important opportunity for Member States to express their continued support for peace, stability and development in Timor-Leste, as the Council will consider the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) in February next year.

As a member of the core group, Japan has consistently been a strong supporter of nation-building in Timor-Leste since the country's independence. My delegation is therefore encouraged by the report by the Council mission that the process of democratization is making good progress. This year, Timor-Leste successfully conducted presidential and parliamentary elections, which constituted a significant milestone for the country in the process of establishing democracy and consolidating peace. We are impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment to democracy among the people, which was witnessed by the international electoral observers, including those from Japan. The visit by the Council mission was timely and contributed significantly to enhancing the work of UNMIT, whose efforts have been welcomed and recognized by the country's people.

There are areas in which more needs to be done. For instance, as the Security Council mission pointed out, there still seem to be political differences among the leadership following the elections. We have full confidence in the wisdom of the people of Timor-Leste and their determination to achieve the political stability and cooperation required for the country's reconstruction. In that context, I would like to stress that the political differences among the parties now can and should be expressed through their representation in the Parliament. I also would like to commend Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for his efforts through the high-level coordination mechanism provided for in resolution 1704 (2006) to facilitate efficient communication both within the Government and between the Government and UNMIT.

Japan also shares the view of the mission that there is still much work to be done in capacity-building, including security sector reform and justice sector reform. The successful holding of the elections is a good indication that the situation is essentially stable and calm. At the same time, we must bear in mind that it is still volatile, as the level of residual trauma and fear among the people remains high.

Rebuilding the professional National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) is indispensable for the maintenance of security. The police officers sent by Japan to UNMIT are doing their part to contribute by, among other things, assisting in the compilation of a basic textbook for new PNTL recruits and acting officers. We are pleased with the efforts by UNMIT to screen and mentor the PNTL, and we are encouraged to see that the PNTL is now seeking greater responsibility in the maintenance of the country's security. However, evaluating the extent of the PNTL's credibility with the people and the community will be key to deciding on the transfer of greater responsibility to the PNTL. In our view, the possibility of transferring responsibility should be assessed by an expert mission, as the Security Council mission suggested.

I would also like to reaffirm Japan's continued commitment to supporting all efforts aimed at peacebuilding and development in Timor-Leste beyond

the peacekeeping stage. Timor-Leste has great potential as a result of the large amount of funds generated by oil revenues. The effective and well-planned use of those funds will contribute to the country's prosperity. In that context, the training and capacity-building of Timorese personnel to manage the funds are critically important.

Peacebuilding is a long, complex and multidimensional process. Since Japan assumed the chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission, we have been actively engaged in promoting assistance for recovery and reconstruction efforts by countries emerging from conflict. I am therefore particularly pleased to observe the progress in the consolidation of peace in Timor-Leste and will continue to follow closely the progress of the peacebuilding efforts.

The situation in Timor-Leste is moving towards stabilization. This time, we must not fail to consolidate peace. UNMIT should continue to play an important role to that end. My delegation also understands that the Government of Timor-Leste would like the United Nations to consider creating an overlap period in which peacekeeping operations and the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission would work in tandem, so that a smooth transition to the consolidation of peace can be ensured. Japan sincerely hopes that the parties concerned will consult in good faith and reach agreement on how best to benefit from the various forms of support for peacebuilding being carried out in parallel with United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

The President: I now call on the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. The European Union commends the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste, led by Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, and welcomes the comprehensive report on its findings. We believe that the mission was successful in identifying the various unresolved challenges that Timor-Leste needs to address in order to achieve stability and prosperity.

We are also pleased that the mission had the opportunity to hear the views of the main political interlocutors — namely, the President, the Prime Minister, Government officials and opposition leaders — as well as representatives of civil society, including the church and non-governmental organizations, of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and of other United Nations agencies on the ground. We appreciate the valuable work of UNMIT and, in particular, of Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste.

The European Union welcomes the progress achieved in recent months. The successfully conducted presidential and parliamentary elections held in April, May and June of this year with high voter participation were a significant step in the process of strengthening democratic institutions in Timor-Leste.

However, as the report of the mission to Timor-Leste acknowledges, some of the root causes of the 2006 crisis and its consequences have not yet been solved. The European Union recognizes critical political, security, socio-economic and humanitarian challenges that need to be tackled.

At the political level, the European Union encourages the current Government and the opposition leaders to pursue political dialogue in order to rebuild mutual confidence and achieve national reconciliation in Timor-Leste. Furthermore, it is essential to solve the Petitioners' issue in a peaceful manner and to bring to justice the group of former military who deserted the National Defense Force.

The European Union also emphasizes the need to restore confidence in the national defense and security institutions, as well as in the judicial system, and encourages the Government to implement the security sector reform programme.

The humanitarian situation is another element of concern for the European Union, because it threatens the political and social stability of Timor-Leste. We call on the Government to create, as its highest priority, conditions for the return, resettlement and reintegration of the internally displaced persons in their local communities.

Additionally, the socio-economic challenges, like poverty and unemployment, particularly among youth,

remain some of the major causes of instability throughout the country.

As the report has highlighted, the European Union recognizes that the future of the country lies in the hands of the people and the Government of Timor-Leste. Indeed, the efforts carried out in the country will only be successful if the Timorese take measures and find the solutions to their own challenges. Nonetheless, the Government needs continued and sustained assistance to overcome capacity shortcomings and governance difficulties.

The European Union reiterates that the involvement of the United Nations is vital for the country's further stabilization and for helping the Government to address the many unresolved questions identified during the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste. In this context, we support continued United Nations engagement in Timor-Leste and a renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste beyond February 2008.

The European Union and its member States remain fully committed to the consolidation of peace and democracy in Timor-Leste. As an example, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, visited Timor-Leste last month and announced an additional €63 million aid package to assist projects related to institutional capacity-building, including support to the judiciary and the parliament, and to health and rural development. The opening of a European Community delegation in Dili in 2008 also shows the continued support of the European Union for the people of Timor-Leste.

The European Union is willing to continue to cooperate closely with the United Nations and the bilateral and multilateral donors on the ground, in order to further consolidate peace and democracy in Timor-Leste and to help the country to achieve self-reliance.

Lastly, I would like to express that the European Union is confident that the Government of Timor-Leste, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, will be able to overcome the numerous challenges that it still faces.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Hill (Australia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Australia.

Mr. Hill (Australia): Australia welcomes the opportunity to again address the Security Council and to contribute to the Council's deliberations on Timor-Leste. We appreciate the visit by the Security Council that took place and thank those who contributed to it. We also thank them for their report. We appreciate the fact that, while in Timor-Leste, they did liaise with the International Stabilisation Force (ISF).

I note that the Secretary-General and both Australia's Prime Minister, the Honourable Kevin Rudd, and Foreign Minister, the Honourable Stephen Smith, will be visiting Timor-Leste tomorrow for further discussions on these issues.

Australia has been at the forefront of international efforts to assist Timor-Leste in laying the foundations for a stable and prosperous nation. We have a vital interest in ensuring Timor-Leste's future success and have demonstrated our continued commitment through our substantial development and security support. We are a leading donor to Timor-Leste and make a significant contribution to the country's security, including through our leadership of the International Stabilisation Force.

Australia welcomes recent positive developments in Timor-Leste such as the successful holding of elections this year. United Nations efforts in Timor-Leste have been integral in creating an environment conducive to the return of stability. Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, has made a particularly important contribution in promoting the constructive and peaceful engagement of Timor-Leste's political leadership, which has principal responsibility for achieving good governance and consolidating democracy.

But, while Timor-Leste has come a long way since the unrest in April and May 2006, the security situation remains fragile pending the resolution of long-term social, political, security and governance challenges. Timor-Leste's security institutions remain weak. The presence of significant numbers of internally displaced persons in camps around Dili and the districts remains a concern. Unemployment, including among Timor-Leste's young population, is also unacceptably high, creating hardship for Timor-Leste's citizens and fuelling political instability.

These issues must be addressed as the basis for Timor-Leste's long-term stability and prosperity.

The Government and the people of Timor-Leste recognize the challenges ahead and are working hard to begin to address them. But they face significant capacity constraints and will need international support for some time to come.

Last year's unrest underscores the importance of sustained international engagement in Timor-Leste to lay a solid foundation for peace and prosperity. The United Nations has invested much in Timor-Leste and must remain at the forefront of international efforts to support the new nation. This involvement should be reflected in an extension of a strong mandate for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste focused strategically on areas of key concern.

In particular, it will be important for the United Nations to continue to play the primary security role in Timor-Leste, until local security forces are able to manage independently, especially through a strong and effective police presence. Security sector reform will be crucial if the people of Timor-Leste are to take full responsibility for their own future.

With the support of the Timor-Leste Government, Australia intends to continue to provide military support to the United Nations Police for as long as the security situation warrants. In passing, I want to record our appreciation also for the ongoing New Zealand military support to the ISF. Australia is also looking to provide enhanced bilateral assistance in support of police and defense force development.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Australia's strong commitment to supporting Timor-Leste and emphasize that we look forward to continuing to work closely with the United Nations to this end.

The President: I shall now give the floor to members of the Council.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Ambassador Sangqu for his oral report on last month's mission to Timor-Leste, which was led by Ambassador Kumalo. We would like to thank the Secretariat for the detailed written report on that mission (S/2007/711). We also pay tribute here to Ambassador Kumalo's leadership and to his commitment to the work that the international community is doing in Timor-Leste.

We strongly endorse the observation that the fact that mission happened should be seen as reaffirmation of United Nations support for Timor-Leste. We have listened with interest to the input of the other United Nations Member States who spoke this morning. Their part in the international effort in Timor-Leste is, of course, a vital part of us all working together for success.

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Three themes recur throughout these reports. I believe the first theme is that United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the International Stabilisation Force are doing an excellent job working alongside the Timorese people and institutions. The United Kingdom joins other speakers in commending Special Representative Khare's efforts. While there may be room for review and further improvement, I think the overall impression that comes through strongly is of a very confident, integrated mission performing to high standards and in close partnership with the International Force. That being said, we endorse the mission's recognition of the need to send an expert mission from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to review the role and responsibility of UNMIT police and their relationship with the National Police Force of Timor-Leste and the Ministry of the Interior.

The second theme concerns the fact that, while Timor-Leste post-conflict transition continues on track, it is the case that the situation remains fragile, volatile and prone to setback if specific challenges are left untackled. First, there are the immediate challenges: resolution of the issue of the petitioners, ensuring accountability and justice — and that includes bringing Major Reinado to justice — and alleviating and resolving the situation faced by some 100,000 internally displaced persons.

Without wishing to diminish the importance of those immediate challenges, they can each be addressed, we believe, through treatment of some fundamental challenges and concerns. The Timorese political leadership, while maintaining healthy differences of view over policy, should unite around a shared vision of an independent, prosperous and united country. Timorese institutions, in particular in the security and judicial sectors, still lack capacity and

sufficient numbers of qualified personnel. A sustained process of security sector reform, in our view, needs to continue, and robust budget execution is needed in the service of socio-economic development. In short, the Timorese economy needs to grow and create jobs. And the Timorese Government needs to use the Petroleum Fund to help it do so.

The third theme that comes through the report is that only the Timorese people can ensure that Timor-Leste succeeds. I think this was one theme that was stressed by the mission when it visited the country. The United Nations and other international partners can help achieve success, but they cannot resolve the underlying challenges. The lessons of 2006 have been learned: the international community will not reduce its commitment precipitately, without assurance that Timor-Leste can stand alone.

But nor will the international community want to foster a relationship which encourages dependence and discourages Timorese self-reliance. The United Kingdom therefore supports the extension of UNMIT's mandate in February, but we also support the mission's request that the Secretary-General continue to report in such a way that an assessment can be made as to how much United Nations support will be needed in the future.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): Let me first express my delegation's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the initiative of holding this timely debate on the report of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste (S/2007/711).

We wish to commend the Security Council delegation, under the leadership of Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo of South Africa, for having successfully discharged its mandate in accordance with its terms of reference. We are pleased, in particular, that the visit to the country was overwhelmingly perceived as reaffirmation of the continued support for and assistance to Timor-Leste by the United Nations and the international community.

We highly value the timing of the visit of the Security Council mission to the country. As rightly stated in the report, the mission took place as the country was confronting enormous challenges in trying to recover from the crisis of 2006 and following the first presidential and parliamentary elections, held in April, May and June 2007. The mission also took place well ahead of the Council's discussion on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which will expire on 26 February 2008.

The elections were clearly a step forward for Timor-Leste in the consolidation of democracy, for which the people and the leaders of Timor-Leste deserve our deep appreciation. We share the mission's observation that while progress has been made in democratization, the root causes of last year's crisis and its consequences are yet to be fully addressed.

A number of underlying political tensions from the time of the crisis and the recent elections remain in many sections of society. Central to the crisis were issues of divisions in the leadership, weak institutions, especially the security forces, and lack of solid structures of Government. The problems stemming from the crisis, such as the case of fugitive Major Reinado, the petitioners and internally displaced persons (IDPs), continue to pose serious challenges to the peace and stability of the country.

On another note, we share the mission's observation that poverty continues to be a major cause of instability in Timor-Leste, where about 40 per cent of the population still lives under the national poverty line. We note with interest that youth employment has been identified as a priority area by the Government in the international compact for Timor-Leste. It is our belief that there is a compelling need to integrate development-related aspects with responses to the security situation.

We have taken note that the Security Council delegation held productive discussions and exchanges of view with various interlocutors of Timor-Leste. The delegation made effective use of these meetings to explore ways and means to assist the country in developing its capacities, in particular in the fields of democratic governance and security, built on the gains achieved thus far.

In this regard, we commend the determination of the people and the Government of Timor-Leste, under the leadership of President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão, to restore stability and normalcy in the country, while reaffirming their commitment to democracy.

In the light of the enormous challenges faced by the country, there is no doubt that continued support and assistance from the international community to this

young country is needed. Strengthening State institutions, security sector reform and economic development should remain at the core of the assistance.

It is our view that UNMIT should continue to exercise its good offices role to contribute in resolving the divergences among the political leadership which continue to exist. This role is especially pertinent at a time when national consensus is required to address the serious challenges confronting the country, such as the urgent need for national reconciliation, security sector reform, restoring stability, addressing IDP issues, strengthening democratic institutions and improving governance.

It is also our view that UNMIT should encourage the Government and the people of Timor-Leste to take ownership and leadership of the country's development, including in the implementation of assistance programmes provided by the United Nations and other partners.

Finally, it is important for the Council to reaffirm its commitment to Timor-Leste in the promotion of long-term stability in the country and in the attainment of self-reliance.

The report of the Security Council mission to the country and the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of UNMIT's mandate will allow the Council to assess the extent of the United Nations support needed for Timor-Leste in the future.

Indonesia, on its part, remains committed to supporting Timor-Leste, in particular on a bilateral basis, so that the country can achieve sustainable peace and prosperity. Indonesia and Timor-Leste continue to enjoy excellent relations on the basis of forward-looking and reconciliatory principles as we continue to deepen and expand bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the South African mission for its briefing.

China supports the report of the Security Council mission. In my capacity as representative of China, I participated in the mission myself and personally observed the situation in Timor-Leste after it had experienced numerous setbacks and everything still remained to be accomplished. I deeply sensed the ardent aspirations of the people of Timor-Leste to peace, stability and development, as well as the resolve of the Government of the country to lead it to continued successes.

Although Timor-Leste has achieved some economic development, reconstruction and democratization, as a young country it continues to face great challenges. In that respect, I wish to raise several issues.

First, the leaders of all the parties of Timor-Leste should achieve reconciliation through dialogue and address the security issue together. This year, Timor-Leste successfully held elections, but the political and reconciliation process has not been completed. Meanwhile, the issues lingering after last year's unrest remain to be resolved and continue to affect peace and stability. The issues of internally displaced persons, the petitioners and Major Reinado are interconnected. In particular, the issues surrounding the petitioners and Major Reinado are breeding a sense of insecurity among the people, who have no choice but to remain internally displaced for an extended period of time. That in turn has exacerbated the instability in the security situation.

If those three issues are to be addressed effectively, the political forces of Timor-Leste — particularly the Government and the main opposition party FRETILIN — should reach a consensus and cooperate fully with one another. The discord between the Government and FRETILIN is the single issue that poses the greatest potential threat to the security of Timor-Leste. China calls on all the parties of Timor-Leste to keep the interests of the people and the stability of the country in mind and to seize this good opportunity to restore peace and to achieve development. They should resolve their disagreements by communicating with one another, strive to resolve the aforementioned issues affecting the security situation in Timor-Leste, and lead the people in a focused manner to promote the development of the country.

Secondly, while pursuing its peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste, the United Nations should increase its assistance so as to improve the country's ability to govern itself. The history of the independence and development of Timor-Leste has been closely linked to the United Nations from the very beginning. It is the unshirkable responsibility of the Organization

to ensure that Timor-Leste embarks on a path towards success. At the same time, the country's future and destiny are in the hands of its own people.

On our mission, we noted that the functioning of certain institutions in Timor-Leste still depends on the assistance and support of the United Nations and other international agencies. In particular, the larger part of the Timorese police force remains in the phase of identification, verification and reappointment and in some regions United Nations peacekeeping personnel continue to participate in front-line law enforcement. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and other international agencies should devote greater efforts in the next phase to helping the country to improve its self-governing capacities. The United Nations police should shift the focus of its work to training and to transferring experience and skills to the Timorese police force. With respect to political reconciliation, the United Nations can continue to offer constructive recommendations, but should avoid bypassing the Timorese authorities and undertaking activities on their behalf.

Thirdly, the achievement of sustainable peace and security in Timor-Leste will depend fundamentally on the development of the economy and on improving people's lives. The fact that 40 per cent of the population is living in poverty and that the rate of unemployment has reached 40 per cent are the main causes of the instability in the country. The Government of Timor-Leste should identify a targeted development plan as soon as possible and effectively develop and exploit its rich gas, petroleum and tourist resources. At the same time, efforts should be made to utilize the benefits of development to improve people's lives, with an accent on education and human resources development, in order to continuously raise the level of employment, especially among young people, so as to restore their confidence in the Government and in their own future and to undermine the factors of instability. The international community should, of course, continue to provide all manner of assistance to expedite that process. China hopes that Asian countries can extend a helping hand so as to achieve the common prosperity of the region.

As a member of the Asia-Pacific family, China has paid great attention to the development of the situation in Timor-Leste, and sincerely hopes that the country can achieve State development, social harmony and the well-being of the people as soon as possible. Within the limits of its abilities, China will continue to provide support to Timor-Leste.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I should like to start by thanking our South African colleague for his briefings of last Thursday and today on the mission to Timor-Leste. I commend him on the professionalism he demonstrated in his leadership of the visit.

I also wish to affirm that my delegation fully supports the statement made by our Portuguese colleague on behalf of the European Union. My statement will focus on certain additional aspects.

One of the main conclusions drawn by the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste is the fact that, despite the important work done by the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the authorities of the country over the past 18 months, both the causes and the consequences of the 2006 crisis persist. It is precisely on the causes and consequences of that crisis that I wish to dwell further.

The division within the leadership was one of the major causes of the 2006 crisis. Now that legislative and presidential elections are over, a new chapter is opening for the country. The main opposition party, FRETILIN, informed the Security Council mission of its determination not to use violence and is participating in parliamentary meetings. That positive attitude should be welcomed, but national unity needs to be bolstered. The country continues to face an identity crisis. As the report before us quite correctly points out, national consensus is required to resolve the serious problems confronting the country.

The Council's mission also noted that another of the causes of last year's crisis continues to prevail, namely, the weakness of institutions, the security forces in particular. Strengthening those forces is precisely one of the major components of UNMIT's mandate. The Council's mission also took note of the tensions between UNMIT and the national police. The national police should understand that it is in its interest to be recognized by the population and that the process under way, far from calling it into question, is precisely designed to strengthen it and its democratic legitimacy.

Allow me now to move from the causes to the consequences of this crisis. Whether as regards Major Reinado and his sympathizers, displaced persons or the

petitioners, it is crucial to prevent the aftermath of the 2006 crisis from leaving a permanent mark on Timorese society. As the visit revealed, those three issues are intrinsically linked and continue to be unresolved 18 months following the crisis. Although it was certainly difficult to resolve them during the electoral campaigns, it is now up to the new team to resolutely address those sensitive problems.

It is good to note that there is a move towards an acceptable solution to the issue of petitioners by all concerned. It is also commendable that the Government is seeking a negotiated solution to the matter of Major Reinado. However, as the report states, the process of reconciliation cannot take place to the detriment of the need for justice, as both go hand-in-hand.

My delegation is especially concerned about the issue of displaced persons, which, as we know, affects about 10 per cent of the population. Everything should therefore be done to enable their return. That of course entails many material aspects, but it also depends upon people feeling safe in their places of origin and upon the feeling of justice being done vis-à-vis the 2006 crisis.

The challenges facing the new Government are certainly numerous, but it has a major asset, namely, the existence of significant natural resources. Gas and oil income provide the Government of Timor-Leste the keys for fruitful investment in the country's development and the future of its people, including in the socio-economic conditions of the country. My delegation intends to look to the future resolutely. In that connection, the mission's report contains some proposals that have garnered our full attention. The Council's support continues to be more necessary than ever. It is in that spirit that my delegation will approach the negotiations on the renewal of UNMIT's mandate in February 2008.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome the Timor-Leste delegation to today's meeting. We have carefully read its assessment and listened to the ideas put forth by several interested delegations.

The Russian delegation participated actively in the work of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste that took place from 24 to 30 November. We would like to express our particular gratitude to Ambassador Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa, and the representatives of the Secretariat for the successful organization and conduct of the trip and the preparation of the report (S/2007/711). We are of course grateful to the entire delegation of South Africa for all their work to prepare and carry out the mission. We are pleased to note that the tasks entrusted to the mission were carried out effectively.

The visit to Timor-Leste by members of the Security Council bore witness to the support of the United Nations and the international community for the first steps of that young country in strengthening its sovereignty and independence and developing democratic institutions. The leaders and people of Timor-Leste are working to lay down the foundations of Statehood and a modern civil society. The country has just held open and fair parliamentary and presidential elections. In meetings with representatives of political parties and civil society, we were able to assure ourselves of their determination to move ahead to effective State-building.

However, as a State that became independent just five years ago, Timor-Leste continues to confront serious challenges, including the dire socio-economic situation, the weakness of its national and security institutions, the lack of professional workers and the problem of petitioners and internally displaced persons. It is clear that a solution to those problems will be impossible without political consensus and national dialogue and reconciliation.

It is of course important that we continue to provide Timor-Leste with the necessary international support, including through the United Nations. We note with satisfaction, as we saw for ourselves in Timor-Leste during the Security Council's mission, that the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste is effectively carrying out the tasks entrusted to it and enjoys widespread support and authority among both the country's leaders and its people. I would like to note in particular the great role played by the Mission to support the rule of law and provide good offices in the process of national reconciliation and dialogue. In addition, the International Stabilisation Force is making a useful contribution to the stability of Timor-Leste.

Through Russia's participation in the Security Council's mission, we were once again able to see for ourselves the need for extending the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste,

given the specific desire expressed by the leaders of the country. Strengthening the independence and self-sufficiency of Timor-Leste will depend directly upon the willingness of national security bodies to maintain law and order. Accordingly, we place great hopes on the speedy training of Timor-Leste's police by the United Nations police component.

Looking ahead, the main thrust of the activities of the United Nations in Timor-Leste should be to encourage that young country to resolve the problems it faces itself. The primary responsibility for the country's future lies with the people of Timor-Leste themselves.

Ms. Wolcott (United States of America): We welcome this opportunity to comment on the report (S/2007/711) on the Security Council's recent visit to Timor-Leste. I was pleased to be part of that mission. The timing of the visit was optimal, as it will assist the Council as it reviews the mandate of United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which expires in February 2008. Based on the delegation's findings and our own experience in Timor-Leste, the future mandate of UNMIT should include the following priorities.

First, there should be continued emphasis on security-sector reform, in particular on the training and institutional development of the Timorese police force. In that regard, the United States Government supports a review of the role and responsibility of UNMIT police in relation to the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL), as requested by the Special Representative in the country. Such a review could point to key improvements in UNMIT's training and professional development programme for the PNTL.

Secondly, the mandate should include support for reconciliation and the resolution of differences among the Timorese leadership, so that the Timorese Government and opposition cooperate to reintegrate internally displaced persons and resolve other pressing issues, including those raised by the petitioners and military dissident Major Alfredo Reinado, as well as by other unresolved cases such as those identified by the 2006 committee of inquiry. As noted in the mission's report, reconciliation should be without prejudice to justice and accountability, to the Government's right to govern in accordance with the Constitution and laws, and to the opposition's right to oppose Government policies using exclusively peaceful and non-violent means.

Thirdly, it should include assistance to the Government in support of key policy objectives, such as improving the business investment climate, promoting economic development, improving governance and strengthening the rule of law. A particular priority should be a justice system that is independent, impartial, transparent, accessible and efficient and that enjoys the confidence of the community.

I wish to thank the Government of Timor-Leste for hosting our visit and the United Nations for making all the arrangements for it.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the Permanent Representative of South Africa, Ambassador Kumalo, for his comprehensive report on the mission that he led to Timor-Leste towards the end of November. We appreciate the additional light that has been shed on the challenges facing the country and the crucial support of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) towards their resolution.

Allow me to also take this opportunity to commend the mission for engaging with a broad spectrum of stakeholders in relation to the future of the country. The fulfilment of its terms of reference called for nothing short of such extensive engagement by the mission, and my delegation is hopeful that the visit will serve to re-energize the process of national reconciliation and democratization in Timor-Leste.

We welcome in that regard the assurances given by the leadership of the country, especially President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão, and the opposition leader, former Prime Minister Alkatiri, that they were fully committed to those goals.

We also support an enhanced role for civil society in all aspects of national development, especially in fostering social cohesion and a strong sense of solidarity among the people of Timor-Leste. We trust that the appropriate mechanisms would, in due course, be put in place to enable civil society to play its role effectively.

My delegation remains concerned about the fragile security situation, the plight of the internally displaced persons and the lack of employment opportunities for an estimated 40 per cent of the youth.

We believe that the ongoing efforts to address the institutional problems of the security sector and the administration of justice ought to be accompanied by meaningful programmes that aim at addressing the underlying socio-economic problems that threaten the stability of Timor-Leste. The Government and opposition must work closely together to meet the needs of their people.

The capacity-building requirements in policing, public service and the judiciary deserve sustained attention, as that would affect the pace at which the Government of Timor-Leste would eventually take over the functions that are currently being performed by the international partners or with their assistance. Therefore, it is important that the Government and UNMIT follow through with initiatives such as the Supplemental Arrangement on Policing and the security sector reform process within the framework of the proposed national security policy.

Finally, we remain concerned about the failure of the authorities to apprehend and bring to trial the fugitive Armed Forces of Timor-Leste military police commander, Major Alfredo Reinado, who managed to escape from prison in August 2006. Apart from its negative implications for the justice and accountability process initiated by the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry into crimes committed during the 2006 crisis, Major Reinado's continuing evasion of justice will inevitably add fuel to the perception of bias, especially among those who have been held accountable for their actions in last year's crisis. We trust that the Government will use all available means to resolve that issue.

Once again, we believe that the mission led by Ambassador Kumalo was most timely and worthwhile, and the recommendations contained in the report deserve serious attention by all concerned.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you again for convening this debate this morning, Mr. President, and allow me to thank Ambassador Baso Sangqu, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa, for his briefing on behalf of Ambassador Kumalo, head of the Security Council field mission to Timor-Leste. I would also like to commend my colleagues who participated in that mission for their fine efforts.

The Security Council mission had a significant impact in reaffirming the commitment of the international community, and especially of the United Nations, to promoting stability in Timor-Leste and providing assistance to the Timorese people in order to consolidate peace, democracy and the rule of law. The mission was successful in carrying out its mandate in accordance with its terms of reference, as reflected in the positive reactions in Timor-Leste at the governmental and popular levels. Furthermore, in the context of the reaffirmation of international support for Timor-Leste, the Secretary-General is scheduled to pay a visit to Dili tomorrow to complement the Security Council mission.

The achievement of national reconciliation and the resolution of differences among the political leaders must be on the list of priorities in Timor-Leste, so as to maintain national unity and political stability. Promoting security and enhancing the effectiveness and professionalism of the security sector should also be among the priorities in Timor-Leste, especially as tensions and incidents threatening security continue to take place from time to time, and since improving the security environment would contribute significantly to resolving the problem of internally displaced persons, who still make up a large proportion of the country's population.

Cooperation between the national police and the police of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) must be enhanced. In order to establish an atmosphere of security and reconciliation, accountability is necessary, particularly in connection with the events of 1999 and 2006, while maintaining a balance between the requirements of national reconciliation and fair accountability. Consequently, national reconciliation and security improvement will have a great impact on ending ambiguity as well as on enhancing people's trust in the country's institutions.

In addition to political and security concerns, Timor-Leste continues to face major issues that should be addressed, including development and combating poverty, both of which contribute to instability. The country also needs to strengthen the judicial sector as a key element in achieving the rule of law.

According to the recent report of UNMIT on human rights, the Timorese people enjoy a wide range of human rights and are firmly committed to peace, democracy and free elections. That is encouraging and a cause for optimism in spite of the challenges faced by the country, both in terms of the security situation and

of upholding justice and accountability. In order to maintain trust and confidence in the field of human rights, it will be necessary to enhance transparency to address the issue of impunity and to improve transparency and accountability.

We look forward to the new Government, headed by Mr. Gusmão, striving actively to lay the foundations of democracy in the country and implementing priority programmes aimed at enhancing security and improving the living conditions of the people. However, as the Security Council mission notes in its report, the Government will need the support of bilateral and multilateral partners to achieve its goals. Continued support to that country by the international community and international donors remains indispensable at this stage, in order to assist the Timorese people to proceed on the path of strengthening the foundations of democracy, the consolidation of peace, reconstruction, recovery and prosperity in their country and to take their deserved place among the family of nations. They must be assisted to achieve self-reliance.

UNMIT has played a major role in providing assistance to meet the challenges still facing that young country. For that reason, we agree with the Council mission that the role of UNMIT continues to be indispensable and that the Council should renew the mission's mandate next February.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): I too wish to thank Ambassador Kumalo and the Secretariat for preparing a comprehensive report on the recent Security Council mission to Timor-Leste (S/2007/711). The report very precisely reflects the observations of the mission, and we fully share its findings and conclusions. That is why I will limit my statement to only a few comments. Before doing so, I wish to stress that we fully align ourselves with the statement that was delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

We welcome the progress in the process of peace consolidation in Timor-Leste following the conflict in 2006. At the same time, the situation in the country is still fragile and there are many challenges that should be addressed in order to make the path towards stability and prosperity in the country irreversible and sustainable. Outstanding problems, including the issues of internally displaced persons, petitioners and the case of Mr. Alfredo Reinado, as well as the root causes of the crisis of 2006, can only be resolved, in our view, through political dialogue and the common efforts of all political parties and leaders.

We urge Timor-Leste's leaders to redouble their efforts to address their political differences and to build the trust needed between them and the people in order to confront the economic and social challenges facing the country. A meaningful role for the opposition in this process is crucial. At the same time, those in the opposition must respect the results of the elections and the parliamentary majority of the current coalition. We believe the calls for early elections that the mission heard from former Prime Minister Alkatiri are counterproductive, divisive and dangerous.

We noted that the overall security situation has improved, but it is still fragile and highly dependent on the presence of international forces to ensure security in the country. In that context, it is essential, in our view, to strengthen the review and reform process of the security sector in Timor-Leste. As the mission observed, there is a series of challenges facing the security sector, including the need to improve relations between the police and the military, to strengthen the legal framework of security institutions and increase their capacities and the need to enhance civil oversight of the security sector in order to insure its accountability.

Last but not least, we hope that the process of certification of the police force will be completed as soon as possible and that the Timorese police will start assuming more responsibility for the security in Timor-Leste. We also hope that the role of the UNMIT police will be reviewed, with more focus on the training of the national police to ensure maximum results in that respect. We also wish to underline that we would welcome sending a team of experts from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to assist in the situation and to define ways to cope with outstanding issues in that area, as soon as possible

Finally, a functioning security sector is an important prerequisite for the efficient functioning of the justice system and institutions. Strengthening the justice system, in particular, is a major aspect of building a culture for the peaceful settlement of conflicts in Timor-Leste. We note with satisfaction that a justice system programme is in place in Timor-Leste, which aims to improve the capacity of the courts, prosecution and justice administration in the areas of

professional ethics, individual skills and systems and processes. Strengthening justice is also crucial in building respect for the rule of law, which has been undermined by a widespread perception of a lack of accountability. In this context we believe it is essential to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry.

This is a crucial moment for Timor-Leste, and it should seize the opportunity to build on what has already been achieved in the areas of security and democracy. The continued support of the United Nations and the international community remains critical for the further stability of the country and for strengthening peace and democracy. In that regard, we support the extension of the UNMIT mandate, with possible adjustments properly reflecting current needs and tasks which the country is facing.

Mr. Suescum (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Panama would like to congratulate and thank the members of the Security Council and the Secretariat who took part in the mission to Timor-Leste for their management of that mission. We wish to thank the South African delegation in particular, for the detailed report the mission has given us today on the results of its visit to Timor-Leste, on the achievements thus far and the continuing challenges (S/2007/711).

The visit of the Security Council was timely, as it took place before the expiration of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) in February 2008. The mission made it possible for Council members to gain first-hand knowledge of events since the approval of the previous mandate of UNMIT, knowledge which will certainly have an impact on the framework of UNMIT's new mandate.

I wish to reiterate Panama's willingness to Panama to work with other Council members in renewing UNMIT's mandate, bearing in mind the achievements thus far and the priorities — some of which have been highlighted here by the representative of Timor-Leste — that still require the support of the United Nations, of UNMIT and of the international partners.

With respect to the progress that has been made, we congratulate the Government and people of Timor-Leste for the conclusion of the presidential and parliamentary elections and for beginning the process of security sector reform and promoting the rule of law.

Timor-Leste is still facing challenges such as the continuation of serious internal divisions, despite the information of a democratic Government. The people of Timor-Leste, first and foremost, are responsible for resolving those problems, and we recognize in that respect the importance of the process of dialogue and national reconciliation begun by the Government of Timor-Leste.

The success of this process will be the best vehicle for restoring the confidence of the people in government institutions. The Security Council should continue to support that process. In view of this, the new mandate for the Mission should promote dialogue and national reconciliation among the main political actors and other members of society, in order to eliminate the causes of the crisis of 2006.

With respect to the fragile security situation, we believe that it has improved, but review of that sector should continue. UNMIT should continue to provide support for the definition of the legal framework that defines the role of the police and the armed forces.

On the need to strengthen justice, we have seen advances in the drafting of laws and trials for the events related to the 2006 crisis. The recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry must be complied with and the investigations begun by the Office of the Prosecutor-General of Timor-Leste of human rights violations must be completed. UNMIT should continue its work in the area of technical cooperation in order to strengthen the judicial system.

Lastly, we praise the efforts of UNMIT and of the international partners for the support that they provide to the people of Timor-Leste in crucial areas, including economic and social development. The work of this Council now will be to provide UNMIT and Timor-Leste with ideal tools to consolidate the achievements that have been made and to ensure lasting peace and stability and democracy.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to welcome the results of the mission led by Ambassador Kumalo. That visit has made it possible to reaffirm the international community's commitment alongside the people of Timor-Leste at an important time in the consolidation of peace, stability and democracy in that country.

I would also like to express our satisfaction with the commitment expressed by both the Government

and the opposition to resolve the political differences through peaceful and diplomatic means and with the commitment shown by all Timorese to democratic principles. It is normal and healthy that different views be expressed, as in any democracy. However, it is important that the political actors make sure that they do not weaken institutions.

The report of the Security Council mission (S/2007/711) rightly insists on the importance of strengthening State institutions, particularly the security forces and the judicial system. Those are keys to a lasting stabilization of Timor-Leste. Allow me to stress in particular the crucial character of strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights. I would like to recall in that regard the importance that France places on the work done by the UNMIT Independent Special Commission of Inquiry on serious crimes.

Progress made in the stabilization of Timor-Leste in the last 18 months has been significant, and we welcome the efforts of the authorities and the people of Timor-Leste to put the country back on its feet. As the representative of Timor-Leste has just recalled, however, those strides are fragile. We therefore feel that the international community should remain actively involved in supporting the country. We are ready to review favourably the renewal of the UNMIT mandate in February 2008.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa for his efficient management of the Security Council's mission in Timor-Leste in the last week of November, and we would like to thank the delegation of South Africa for presenting the report (S/2007/711).

Peru would like to reiterate its firm support for the people and Government of Timor-Leste in the search for a State that is peaceful and sustainable in the long term. We believe that it is important for the Government and all the parties to continue to work together, on the basis of dialogue and reconciliation, in order to strengthen the progress that has been achieved and to overcome the current situation of fragility and instability in the security, political and humanitarian aspects.

We agree with and share the observations presented in the mission's report, in particular where its says that in the light of the enormous challenges faced by the country, Timor-Leste will continue to require assistance from the United Nations in different areas for the foreseeable future. From our point of view, it is crucial that the Security Council continue to be committed to assisting Timor-Leste, since we all know that reconciliation and development are complex processes that require time.

In that context, we believe that the Security Council must renew the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) when its mandate expires in February 2008, with a view to supporting the people and the leaders in taking on the great challenges that remain to be resolved, especially in the aspects of strengthening democratic institutions, building the rule of law and developing the country.

The future of Timor-Leste is in its own hands. Its leaders and the population in general must assume that responsibility and continue to promote economic development and to ensure that the distribution of income reaches those who are most in need.

In support of those efforts, UNMIT must continue to cooperate and coordinate with the United Nations system and the international community in order to support the Government with the implementation of the national development plan, as well as attention to other outstanding matters. Some of those are security sector reform, strengthening the justice sector and promoting democracy, human rights and humanitarian assistance, in particular the resolution of the problem of the internally displaced persons. We do agree with the proposal of the Special Representative, Mr. Atul Khare, that the Secretary-General should deploy a mission of experts to examine the relationship between UNMIT police and the armed forces and the Ministry of the Interior, in accordance with the supplementary agreement on the functions of the police.

Lastly, I would like to draw the attention of the international community of donors and entities of the United Nations to the need to continue to cooperate and to invest in Timor-Leste.

Mr. Okio (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation is grateful to you for once again giving us an opportunity to take up the situation of Timor-Leste, a country friendly to Congo. We would like to thank Ambassador Kumalo and his team for the very complete report (S/2007/711) that he has given us.

My delegation would like to say how pleased it is at the work done by the Security Council delegation in

such a short period of time. The contacts established with the entire political class, civil society and other actors attest to the determination of the Security Council to get a feel for the realities, which are not always easy to grasp from New York, despite the impeccable quality of the briefings given by the Secretariat. That also allows participation in the rebuilding of the social fabric, which has been seriously impaired by recent events in that country.

My delegation would like to say that it is in favour of continuing such Security Council missions, carried out by light and representative teams. We regret that we were not able to participate in the recent mission because of some national imperatives.

Taking into account what has already been said by other delegations, Congo would like to make the following comments.

We take note of the determination of the Timorese Government to do everything it can to strengthen peace and stability in order to release the people from poverty, but also to relieve the United Nations of its current responsibilities vis-à-vis Timor-Leste. My delegation also takes into account and welcomes the fact that the Government of Timor-Leste rejects a culture of dependence, stating clearly that letting things slide would not be appropriate, nor would a premature celebration, as there are enormous challenges still facing the country. Those political commitments are signs of the Government's maturity, in a young nation resolved to quickly take in hand the control of its own destiny as an independent and sovereign nation.

More than ever before, therefore, the international community has a duty to complete its work there and to live up to the legitimate expectations of the Timorese. Here, the activities of the United Nations have to be ongoing, through its main multilateral mechanisms. This will be crucial for peacebuilding, promoting the rule of law and strengthening democracy and national institutions.

The capacity of the Timorese political class has to be reflected in greater ability to work together in the higher interest of the nation, both in the parliament and in other national structures, in order to enable this young nation to meet the challenges strewn along its path to the future. Members of this political class must resolutely commit themselves to dialogue and national reconciliation and put an end to the ongoing differences which make them lose sight of their development goals, which squander their energies and which endanger the restoration of security and stability.

Social and economic questions relating to poverty and widespread unemployment, as well all the consequences of the 2006 crisis, demand that priority be given today to resolving a number of serious problems. The first is the case of Major Alfredo Reinado and the situation of the petitioners — that is, the former members of the military who were asked to leave the army or who deserted. The second is the reintegration of the 100,000 displaced persons who are now living in about 53 camps and the improvement of their living conditions. This situation adds the threat of a humanitarian catastrophe to the many challenges that Timor-Leste must confront. The third is continued capacity-building in State institutions in general, and particularly in the justice sector, and the formulation of a Government strategy for reform in the sensitive security sector, which is seen as the Achilles heel of the Timorese institutions.

Because of its mandate, and in light of the results it obtained, the recent Security Council mission once again showed that the Council and the broader United Nations are committed to Timor-Leste. My delegation is convinced that, as in the past, the Council must be very attentive to needs expressed and act for the best, through the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste, with regard to the readjustment of the role of the United Nations Police in Timor-Leste and other vital questions, such as the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

The Congo supports the conclusions contained in the report of the Security Council mission, and we support the renewal of the UNMIT mandate so that the young Timorese nation will be able to continue to rely on the United Nations system until it attains self-reliance.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Italy.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. My brief remarks are meant to complement those of the European Union presidency.

At the outset, I join other delegations in thanking Ambassador Kumalo and his team for their leadership

on the mission, as well as for coordinating the preparation of the report (S/2007/711). The attention devoted to this mission by the Timorese people and authorities, and the richness of the report, validate by themselves the strong impact that the mission has had.

The Security Council sent clear messages to the country at a crucial juncture, and we have now available a considerable wealth of information and ideas that will allow the Council to have a more informed discussion on the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) early next year. In this regard, the mission has confirmed that UNMIT is fulfilling its mandate in an effective manner and that all parties in Timor-Leste count on its continued presence, as we have also heard today from the representative of Timor-Leste.

Indeed, the persistent complexity of the stabilization efforts in Timor-Leste requires sustained attention and assistance from the United Nations in all the key areas, from security to political dialogue, from human rights to development. The events of the past two years have proven that we need to be patient. If we do not continue to make progress, we risk rolling backwards.

In this context, as many have stated, the importance of Timorese ownership cannot be overestimated. It is up to the people and the leadership of Timor-Leste to find solutions to the remaining challenges. I was glad, in this regard, to hear in this Chamber from the Timorese representative last week, and again today, that Timor-Leste sees its relationship with the United Nations and the international community at large as one of interdependence rather than of dependence. That is the approach that should inspire our common action.

The successful organization of the electoral cycle has once again demonstrated the commitment of the Timorese people to peace and democracy. At the same time, the report clearly indicates that, unfortunately, the challenges lying ahead still coincide broadly with those which caused the 2006 crisis. Reconciliation and institution-building remain the most daunting of these challenges, along with the lack of visible progress in people's livelihoods.

The EU presidency has already elaborated on the aforementioned challenges, as well as on the efforts that the European Union is undertaking to help address them. From our side, I would just emphasize the importance of the active participation of Timor-Leste in regional cooperation and integration initiatives, by which the country is raising its international profile and engaging its neighbours in the stabilization process.

Finally, I wish to recall that Italy, along with its EU partners, has constantly supported the young Timorese democracy at all stages of its genesis and development, the latest initiative being the participation of Timorese officials in human rights training courses at the San Remo International Institute of Humanitarian Law. We remain committed to supporting Timor-Leste in its quest to consolidate peace, democracy and development.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. On behalf of the Council, I should like to express gratitude and appreciation to all the members of the Security Council mission, which was very ably led by Ambassador Kumalo, for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibility.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.